

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL
May 23rd, 2022 at 6:00PM

A regular meeting of the La Porte County Council was held on May 23rd, 2022 at 6:00pm (central time) in the Assembly Room of the La Porte County Government Complex located at 809 State Street, La Porte, Indiana, 46350.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6pm by the Council President, Randy Novak.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Novak.

ROLL CALL

All 7 members were physically present for the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MAY 23rd, 2022 AGENDA

Mr. Rosenbaum requested to add item no. 5 under on New Business: discussion on employee bonus, and item no. 6 under New Business: volunteer fire departments, and that additionally the approval of the April 11th, 2022 Special Meeting minutes be postponed to allow for corrections.

i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.

ii. All members voted in favor.

APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 25th, 2022 MEETING MINUTES

i. Motion to approve made by Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Garner.

ii. All members voted in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lisa Pierzakowski, Center Township Trustee

Mrs. Lisa Pierzakowski approached the Council to inform them on the status of the funding for the Rental Assistance Program. She told the Council that she currently had \$12,000, and received \$1,186 back from Canterbury as a result of the processing of an Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority application. She noted that although her office was still working very closely with the IHCD to process even more applications to help cover the program's costs, thirteen more evictions had recently been brought forth to her, which would cost roughly \$24,000 for the program to address. Mrs. Pierzakowski continued that an additional five evictions were being processed which she had not yet received. She explained that three of the potential candidates owed three or more months of rent, and was unsure of how long they would wait to apply for the Rental Assistance Program. She proposed that the Rental Assistance Program may address the clients' rental needs and receive reimbursement from the IHCD afterward. Mrs. Pierzakowski asked if funding would be available to cover the \$12,000 difference, which Mr. Novak noted that he was sure there was available funding in the program's account.

Mr. Yagelski inquired as to whether the evictions at hand were Covid related, which Mrs. Pierzakowski explained that she could not be sure until she spoke with the potential candidates directly.

Auditor Tim Stabosz informed the Council that \$22,000 of unappropriated funds were available for the Rental Assistance Program to use. Mr. Novak asked Mrs. Pierzakowski if she had enough funding to run the program until the next Council meeting, which Mrs. Pierzakowski confirmed that she had enough funding to continue with the program up until that time, however she wanted to ensure that she did not overspend the currently allotted appropriations, as the evictions would be taking place on June 28th, and was wary of what the outcome would be for additional evictions coming from the Normandy Apartments, who had not initially agreed to be part of the Rental Assistance Program.

i. Motion to approve the transfer of \$11,000 of the allocated funds to the Center Township Trustee's existing Rental Assistance Program funding made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.

ii. All members voted in favor.

Mr. Novak added that the Michigan Township Trustee reported to the Council that, for the prior month, they did not use any of the county rental assistance funds.

Mrs. Pierzakowski gave thanks for the funding recently allocated to the Center Township Volunteer Fire Department and added that she hoped that the additional funding provided through item no. 6 under New Business would be approved to further assist the Township Volunteer Fire Departments.

Andy Snyder, La Porte Fire Department Chief – 809 W. 10th St., La Porte

As the Vice President of the County Fire Chief's Association, Mr. Snyder wanted to offer thanks for the Council's allocation of bonus funding for the La Porte County Volunteer Fire Departments, in addition to his gratitude for the passing of the recent Public Safety LIT increase.

Mort Smith, Coolspring Volunteer Fire Department

Assistant Chief Mort Smith thanked the Council for the recent \$10,000 bonus that was given to the Coolspring Volunteer Fire Department.

PUBLIC COMMENT OPEN FLOOR CLOSED.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Jeremy Sobecki, La Porte County Parks Superintendent

Mr. Sobecki informed the Council that the playground at Bluhm County Park was now nearing completion following minor subcontracting troubles which had previously stalled the project's culmination. He announced that the ribbon-cutting for the playground had been rescheduled to August 13th, 2022, at 10am.

Mr. Sobecki added that he was having difficulty acquiring and retaining seasonal employees, with only one of the five positions being currently filled, which was further complicated by said employee recently being on medical leave, thusly rendering the Parks Department seasonal staff at zero. As a result, he continued, the designated full-time staff were needing to take on the tasks that would normally be addressed by the seasonal workers, who already had their hands full with other projects, such as the playground installation. Mr. Novak asked if seasonal employees' tasks were limited to mowing, which Mr. Sobecki noted that they were not limited to mowing, but additionally performed trash pickup, rental facility turn-down, brush trimming, and more. Mr. Sobecki urged the room to direct any interested parties to apply for the five open seasonal positions.

Mr. Sobecki took a moment to tell the Council that the Parks Department's propane budget for the year had already been depleted as a result of increased fuel prices, and that in the future, his hopes were to replenish the propane supply in the summer when prices were lower, so he could have an idea of how much funding he would need to spend, with the intention of returning to the Council the following month for the funding's approval.

He added that the public input meeting for the La Porte County Parks Department's Masterplan would be held at the Parks Department's regular Board Meeting at Bluhm County Park's Grove Shelter on June 7th at 5pm.

Mrs. Gramarossa asked Mr. Sobecki to reiterate how many part-time seasonal employees he had, which he explained that he had two recently hired candidates slated to begin at the end of the upcoming week, however they were students, and their positions would be vacant and in need of replacement in August once they had to leave. Currently, if the two new hires circumstantially worked out, he noted that he would be in need of three more seasonal employees.

Tim Stabosz, La Porte County Auditor

Regarding the reissuance of the County tax bills, Mr. Stabosz explained that the Certified Net Assessed Value had been approved by the DLGF, budget orders had been received, the tax abstract had been produced, and the tax rate chart was ready to be produced in the upcoming week, which would need to be advertised in print for three subsequent weeks before tax bills could be released, which would leave the reissuance of the tax bills' completion to be roughly early June. Additionally, a waiver of penalties policy was currently in the works between the financial officers of the County.

Mr. Novak confirmed that once the date for the release of the new tax bills was determined, that a special meeting would be scheduled to ensure that the late payment penalties could be waived, which

Mr. Stabosz affirmed was the intention, however only for current installment affected by the error, and was not including any previous late-fee penalties owed by taxpayers.

LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman Garner: Mr. Garner had no liaison report to provide.

Councilwoman Gramarossa: Mrs. Gramarossa reported that she had spoken with all of her liaisons, whose operations were running smoothly.

Councilman Mollenhauer: Mr. Mollenhauer reported that he had attended the Commissioners' Meeting, and additionally attended the Veterans' Ceremony for Wilbur Eugene Lawson, a 100-year old WWII veteran, as well at the Center Township Trustee's Open House in celebration of their new location.

Councilman Cunningham: Mr. Cunningham explained that he had numerous, lengthy discussions with Clerk Heather Stevens, all of which would be addressed later in the meeting.

Councilman Yagelski: Mr. Yagelski had no liaison report to provide.

Councilman Rosenbaum: Mr. Rosenbaum reported that he attended a Redevelopment Commission Meeting, and that another RDC Meeting was to occur on the upcoming Wednesday. Additionally, he attended the FMEC meeting to create a Treasurer's Report, which indicated that the FMEC was breaking even and expected a decent turnout on rentals, and noted that fairground and grandstand repairs were in the stage of being painted. Additionally, Mr. Rosenbaum attended the Juvenile Symposium and the ribbon cutting at the EMS and Highway Department building at the new Rolling Prairie location.

Councilman Novak: Mr. Novak attended the FMEC meeting, the RDC meeting, and met with E911 regarding various improvements that E911 Director Barb Huston was going to approach the Council for at a later date. Additionally, he attended the police memorial at the Holdcraft Performing Arts Center.

CORRESPONDENCE

Auditor Stabosz reported that there was no correspondence.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS

Ordinance No. 2022-05A – Recorder's Enhanced Access Fund

- i. Motion to read by title only made by Mr. Rosenbaum.

Council Attorney Guy DiMartino clarified that the Recorder was initially in control of the funds, and had been so for years, and the purpose of the ordinance is to comply with regulations which the Recorder, Elzbieta Bilderback, had researched during a recent meeting. He added that since it was an ordinance,

the rules could be waived, and allow for its passing with two readings during the current evening. Mr. Novak clarified that two readings would be required, which Mr. DiMartino confirmed.

i. Motion to suspend the rules made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.

ii. All members voted in favor.

iii. Mr. Stabosz read aloud the ordinance.

iv. Motion to approve made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mrs. Gramarossa

Mr. Cunningham requested that the fourth paragraph of the ordinance be read aloud during its second reading.

v. All members voted in favor.

vi. Motion to read by title only, with the addition of the ordinance's fourth paragraph made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.

vii. All members voted in favor.

viii. Mr. Stabosz read aloud the ordinance by title only, and additionally, read aloud the fourth paragraph of the ordinance:

"In accordance with Indiana Code section 5-14-3-8.3(b) all funds collected in the Enhanced Access Fund shall be specifically dedicated to the following purposes:

(1) The replacement, improvement, and expansion of capital expenditures;

(2) The reimbursement of operating expenses incurred in providing enhanced access to public information.

This Ordinance shall be in full force and effective from and after its passage and execution by the member of the La Porte County Council."

ix. Motion to approve made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mrs. Gramarossa.

x. All members voted in favor.

Resolution No. 2022-05A – Sullivan Palatek, Inc. – Public Hearing

Mr. Novak opened a public hearing for Resolution No. 2022-05A.

Director of Economic Development's Tony Rodriguez introduced Sullivan Palatek's Director of Operations and Plant Manager Scott Newcomb, who was present to speak regarding Sullivan Palatek's planned expansion and economic revitalization.

PUBLIC COMMENT CLOSED.

Resolution No. 2022-05A – Sullivan Palatek Inc. – Confirmatory

i. Motion to read by title only made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.

ii. Mr. Stabosz read aloud the resolution.

Scott Newcomb approached the Council to elaborate on the improvements that would be made to the Sullivan Palatek facility. He explained that a 5000 sq. ft. facility was being built to test Sullivan Palatek Inc's electrical technology for emissions, as to ensure government compliance with their equipment. Mr. Newcomb added that this would additionally allow for the intake of new technology and employees.

Mr. Yagelski asked Mr. Newcomb how hiring was going for Sullivan Palatek Inc. Mr. Newcomb expressed difficulty in hiring new staff, and added that state assistance was not currently helping with the staffing shortage. Mr. Rosenbaum asked if IV Tech was coordinating with Sullivan Palatek Inc., which Mr. Newcomb explained that job fairs had been hosted at both IV Tech and at Bluechip Casino.

Mr. Rosenbaum informed the room that \$800,000 was being spent by Sullivan Palatek Inc. to make the proposed improvements on real property, and that \$2.8 million of various equipment was going to be secured by Sullivan Palatek Inc. under the proposed resolution, with the company's intention to hire ten more employees and add at least \$400,000 to the company's current payroll.

iii. Motion to approve made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.

iv. All members voted in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Consider approval of Council President's authorization to hire replacement positions for:

a. La Porte County Parks Department – Office Manager

i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.

ii. All members voted in favor.

b. La Porte County Auditor – Accounts Payable Supervisor

i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.

ii. All members voted in favor.

- c. **La Porte County Commissioners upon request of the Historical Society – Museum Director**
 - i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mrs. Gramarossa.
 - ii. All members voted in favor.

2. La Porte County Prosecuting Attorney – Requesting permission to hire a vacant Part-time Adult Protective Services Case Monitor position

Prosecuting Attorney John Lake explained that this was a request for a part-time employee, with intention to hire as full-time if FSAA funding provided for it in the near future.

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mrs. Gramarossa.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

3. Discussion on holding back on tally on Election Night

Mr. Yagelski addressed the concerns regarding the delay of the tabulating of the Primary Election results from the May 3rd election. He noted that despite the County's spending and efforts to ensure that voting was accessible to every viable voter, turnout was still low. He gave credit to the County's traditional tabulation practices, a sentiment backed by Mr. Cunningham who additionally explained that neither Democrats nor Republicans were pleased with the delay in the release of voting information on the evening of the election.

Mr. Cunningham added that much of the frustration regarding the delay in the tabulation results could have been softened if all parties and public had been informed about the Election Board's intention to delay voting results in advance. He added that Clerk Heather Stevens had put forth great effort to ensure that the election ran smoothly, and ultimately, she played no part in the decision to delay its results.

Mr. Novak explained that the delay in releasing the election results was reportedly done to ensure that the same errors from the 2020 Fall Election did not happen, which Mr. Cunningham debated that waiting for all votes to come in did not make the system 100% foolproof.

Election Board President Chuck Watterson read aloud a letter drafted by himself and the Election Board Vice President Nelson Pichardo, a letter in which Mr. Pichardo indicated that the Election Board's intentions of delaying the release of the Primary Election results was to ensure that the calculation of the polling results was as accurate as possible, and a bipartisan decision between himself and Mr. Watterson, and that the actions taken were to avoid the errors that had taken place in the 2020 election. In the letter, Mr. Pichardo conceded that the media should have been informed about the Election Board's intentions to delay the release of the votes until the completion of their tallying, and added that the Election Board looked forward to informing the media of any delays during the November election, if the decision to delay once more was made. He added that the gathering of machines and returning of poll-worker staff, hand-in-hand with the careful process of accumulating votes, added to the time required to accurately calculate election results.

Mr. Pichardo added that, for the November Election, the Election Board would investigate what could be done to release early voting and absentee voting results prior to the final report, as to keep up with the tradition of releasing voting numbers as they came in.

He added that the Election Board would have given more notice regarding the intention to delay the release of the tabulation information, however the decision to postpone the votes until all the numbers came in was made right when the voting machines were being turned in, which resulted in too small of a timeframe to report on the decision. He continued that the excessive number of voting machines contributed to the delay and explained that even machines that were distributed but not used still needed to be tallied to ensure their accuracy. He added that he was unaware of the tradition of releasing unofficial voting results as they were actively being counted, and affirmed that if he were aware of this, he still would not have changed his plan of action. To ensure that some semblance of tradition was honored, he planned on creating a structure where some of the unofficial early results could be released. Additionally, Mr. Watterson added that Microvote, the vote tallying system used by the County, primarily only had one specialized employee who was trained in working with their software, hand-in-hand with a few assistants. He noted that Heather Stevens initially wanted to release the votes as they were coming in, and she had no influence on the Election Board's decision to postpone the release of the election results.

Mr. Yagelski urged for the development of a better system, and reiterated that it was a long-standing tradition to relay vote tallies to the public as they were being counted.

Mr. Cunningham noted that although Mr. Watterson pressed that the decision to delay the release of the votes was bipartisan, the decision to do so should have been more thought through. He asked Mr. Watterson if he was aware of how many voting machines had been distributed, which Mr. Watterson confirmed that he had not known, and it was the Clerk's decision to decide how many voting machines got distributed.

Mr. Yageski proposed developing a seal for each voting machine, which would determine if a machine had been opened for use, thusly, if a machine was returned with an unbroken seal, the voting machine could safely bypass its tabulation knowing that it had not been used, which Mr. Watterson replied that he would look into the legality of such a concept.

Mr. Cunningham pressed once more for earlier transparency if a delay similar to this one was expected to happen in future elections, and recommended a system where the results of early and absentee voting be released early in the evening, to be followed by the results of in-person voting in multiple increments, preferably before the later hours of the evening to ensure that most people could observe them at a reasonable time.

4. Discussion to set Budget Hearings for 2022

Mr. Rosenbaum recommended setting the hearings on the 25th, 26th, and 27th of July, while Mr. Cunningham informed him that July 25th was the day that the Council Meeting would take place, and that in previous years, the hearings would take place in August. Mr. Novak declared that the Budget Hearings would take place on July 26th and July 27th, and potentially July 28th should the need for more time arise.

5. Discussion on Employee Bonus

Regarding the distribution of County employee bonuses, Mr. Novak noted that said bonuses were declared to be set for distribution in the months of December and June. Regarding the ordinance which allowed for the bonuses, Mr. Stabosz clarified that the measuring periods were for six-month increments, with June being the mid-year point, and remaining measuring period being the end-of-year. He added that the year-end bonus had been especially problematic, as the payroll department already had to work with overtime and holidays, and resetting the measuring period of the bonus to the end of November would create an overlap into the holiday period. He offered two options, the first to have the measuring period for the end-of-year bonus being in October, with the distribution of the bonus checks being in mid-November which would allow for the bonus to be distributed before Thanksgiving. The second option Mr. Stabosz offered was leave the measuring period at the end of December, which would allow for the bonuses to be distributed at the end of January.

Mr. Cunningham recommended setting the measuring periods back to ensure that employees received their bonuses in the proposed months of June and December, and recommended that the measuring dates be May 31st and November 31st respectively.

Mr. Novak asked Council Attorney Guy DiMartino if the salary ordinance needed adjusting, which Mr. DiMartino noted that he would need to revisit the ordinance to be sure. Mr. Stabosz advised planning a special meeting, while Mr. Novak proposed that the Auditor approach the bonuses with the intention that their measuring periods be the end of May for their cutoff date, and if corrections needed to be made, they could be done at the June Council Meeting or during a Special Meeting. He clarified that in approving so, the bonus checks would be distributed in the months of June and December. Mr. Stabosz noted that pushing the distribution of the checks in December would inhibit employees' holiday spending, as the checks would go out too late. Mr. Rosenbaum asked why it would take 15 days to distribute the bonus checks, which Mr. Novak added that the measuring dates for the checks could begin in early November, and that employees would simply need to have their hire dates verified to confirm if they were eligible for the bonuses. Mr. Cunningham added that the County was still in operation in the month of December, and that the holidays were only limited to a small number of days within the County calendar, and the bonus' production as such shouldn't be directly affected.

Mr. Stabosz explained that pushing through raises and bonuses simultaneously created pressure for the Auditor's office, however moving raises to August or September would distribute the tasks more favorably. Mr. Novak remarked that the salary increases would hopefully be set before December, which had the potential to lighten the workload of the Auditor's office. Mr. DiMartino read aloud item "K." from the ordinance:

"If employed on January 1, 2022, full time employees are to receive a \$1,000 (one thousand dollar) bonus at mid-year 2022, and a \$1,000 bonus at year end 2022. Each bonus is to be prorated by the number of full months employed for each respective bonus period, January through June, and July through December."

Due to discrepancies in the ordinance's language and the Council's opposing desires to move the measuring dates outside of the ordinance's rules, Mr. DiMartino explained that the ordinance might need amending if the Council desired to move the bonuses' measuring date to May 31st.

Mr. Stabosz pointed out that the language of the ordinance contradicted itself, and that the ordinance dictated that full-time employees were to receive a bonus *at* mid-year of 2022 instead of *for* mid-year 2022, an error which caused difficulty in that a pay period may not directly happen right on the mid-year timeframe. Mr. DiMartino debated that the ordinance's language indicated that the mid-year terminology was applicable to whichever pay period fell closest to the mid-year timeframe.

Mr. Stabosz asked Mr. Rosenbaum to clarify the intention of his original motion for the ordinance, which Mr. Rosenbaum confirmed was for the mid-year bonus checks to be distributed in June, with the intent of the measuring period have been immediate so as long as a full-time employee was confirmed to be eligible for the bonus, however with the impracticability with the current measuring periods, Mr. Rosenbaum advised changing the ordinance to be with the intent that the payment should be distributed in June, and the bonus periods should be altered to accommodate this, and instead proposed a 5-month measurement period and 6-month measuring period to ensure that a November 30th deadline could be made for the winter bonuses.

Mr. Rosenbaum proposed motioning to change the measuring periods from January through May for the first increment of the bonus, and then June through November for the second increment of the bonus, and for the following year, the first measuring period to be December 1st through May 31st. Mr. Yagelski noted that a motion would need to be postponed until the 2022 Salary Ordinance was opened.

i. Motion to open the 2022 Salary Ordinance made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.

ii. All members voted in favor.

iii. Motion to change the measurement dates for the first increment of the bonus checks due in June to be a 5-month period, from January 1st through May 31st, with the second measuring period being from June 1st through November 30th, made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mrs. Gramarossa.

Mr. Stabosz clarified that a five-month proration would be included in the first period, which Mr. Rosenbaum confirmed.

Mr. DiMartino added that the incremental bonus would be paid in full so long as a full-time employee worked ten months or more out of the year, which Mr. Rosenbaum clarified that 11 months of full-time employment would be required to receive both of the increments of the bonus, which Mr. Stabosz added would have five and six month prorations accordingly.

Mr. Yagelski commented that since the original vote yielded three not-in-favor votes, that he would not be voting in favor of the ordinance's new alterations.

iv. Six members voted in-favor (Mr. Novak, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Garner, Mrs. Gramarossa, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Mollenhauer) and one member voted not-in-favor (Mr. Yagelski).

6. Discussion of Volunteer Fire Departments Annual Stipend

Mr. Novak explained that an ordinance could not be created to allow for an individual stipend of \$10,000 to be applied to each of La Porte County's volunteer fire departments for the upcoming five years, however La Porte County Fire Chief Andy Snyder was present to propose that the Chief's

Association would approach the Council annually to represent the sixteen volunteer fire departments collectively.

Mr. Snyder explained that his intention was to have the Chief's Association approach the Council annually with a petition that was representative of all sixteen volunteer fire departments in La Porte County, as to consolidate the requirement for sixteen individual petitions from each fire department location. The letter that would be provided would be offered to the Council at the beginning of each new year.

Mr. DiMartino disclosed that if LIT funds were to be utilized for the volunteer fire departments' individual annual \$10,000 stipends, they would need to be budgeted for, and the Chief's Association would need to be present during Budget Hearings to accommodate this. Mr. Cunningham requested that the Chief's Association be able to submit their petition every January, which Mr. Rosenbaum advised that the petition should instead be submitted in July, so the Council could budget for it during the Budget Hearings. Mr. DiMartino noted that although Mr. Rosenbaum's recommendation could be done, Mr. Snyder would need to be physically present during the current year's Budget Hearings. Mr. Cunningham instead recommended that Mr. Snyder be able to come to the July 25th Council Meeting to offer his petition, so he would not need to make himself available during the days of the Budget Hearings.

Center Township Trustee Lisa Pierzakowski asked that, since the stipends for the volunteer fire departments needed to be requested each year, if there was a chance that they could be denied, which Mr. Novak confirmed was true, as the current Council could not bind the decisions of future Councils. Mrs. Pierzakowski debated that with the passing of the Public Safety LIT, it was designated that townships could receive funding through the creation of Resolutions, which Mr. Cunningham reiterated that submitting a petition through the Chief's Association would suffice.

i. Motion to approve the budgeting of the \$10,000 stipend from Public Safety LIT for La Porte County Volunteer Fire Departments, with permission granted for the Chief's Association to approach the Council on behalf of said 16 fire departments with a petition, with the exception of 2022 in which the Chief's Association must approach the Council in-person the evening prior to 2022's budget hearings, made by Mrs. Gramarossa and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.

ii. All members voted in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS, AND REQUESTS

La Porte County Recorder

Requesting permission to transfer monies from County Identification Security Protection Fund 1160 to County Recorder's Perpetuation Fund 1189. \$76,000

i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.

ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County Prosecuting Attorney

Requesting permission to transfer monies from Child Support IV-D Incentive Fund for:

Part-time pay. not-to-exceed \$15,000

i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.

ii. All members voted in favor.

Prosecutor John Lake explained that two part-time employees had been brought in to cover the workload of a full-time employee who was currently on sick leave, and that the current part-time account only had \$5,000, and the requested \$15,000 would cover the cost of part-time pay through the rest of the year. Mr. Novak asked why the process servers didn't serve the Prosecutor's papers, which Mr. Lake noted that he did not want to burden them with his workload, as it would take too much time. Mr. Novak contested Mr. Lake's statements, and asserted that it was his understanding that the process servers did have time to assist the Prosecutor's Office. Mr. Lake rebuked that many people were proportionately served through the Prosecutor's Child Support division, and the monies from the Incentive Fund needed to be spent.

La Porte County Sheriff

1. Requesting permission to increase the salary for Director of Programs/Treatment Services. Job classification increased from PAT IV to PAT VI.

i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Mollenhauer and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.

ii. All members voted in favor.

2. Requesting permission to spend from Sex and Violent Offender Registry Fund 1192 for:
3 iPads for field use. \$575.67

i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.

ii. All members voted in favor.

3. Requesting permission to spend from Sex and Violent Offender Registry Fund 1192 for:
Annual payment of services of the iPads. \$1,079.24

i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.

ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County Sheriff

Requesting Additional Appropriation from Riverboat (1191) or ARP (8950/8951) for:

1. Annual payment for body cameras. \$114,545

i. Motion to approve out of Riverboat (1191) made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mrs. Gramarossa.

ii. All members voted in favor.

2. Purchase of police pursuit sedan. not-to-exceed \$38,712

i. Motion to approve out of Riverboat (1191) made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mrs. Gramarossa.

ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County Treasurer

Requesting Additional Appropriation from Riverboat (1191) or ARP (8950/8951) for:

Re-issuing Tax bills. not-to-exceed \$50,000

i. Motion to approve out of Riverboat made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mrs. Gramarossa.

ii. All members voted in favor.

Separately, Treasurer Joie Winski requested the creation of an overtime account for the Treasurer's Department, as she said her only five employees had already accumulated 94 hours of compensation time over the course of the first tax season and the repair of the tax bill error alone. Should the account be made, she clarified, it would primarily be used in May and November during tax collection seasons, but also used currently toward the man-hours utilized to assist with the tax bill repair.

Mr. Novak and Mr. Yagelski explained that Mrs. Winski's request would be added onto the agenda of the next Council Meeting.

Mrs. Gramarossa asked when the extra time was occurring, which Mrs. Winski explained that her staff were working Monday through Friday, as late as 7:30pm, and additionally on the weekends to ensure that the tax bill error could be swiftly addressed. She added that in previous years, part-timers were also available to assist during the tax season, however the Treasurer currently had no part-timers to help her full-time team. Mrs. Winski stated that she only wanted the overtime account for 2022, and if an overtime account were required for any following years, she would approach the Council with her request.

La Porte County Coroner

Requesting Additional Appropriation from Riverboat (1191) or ARP (8950/8951) for:

Autopsies. \$70,000

i. Motion to approve out of Riverboat (1191) made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.

Coroner Lynn Swanson explained that the funds requested would be used to get the Coroner through the end of the year, and that the County Prosecutor John Lake had requested that all drug overdoses be addressed with an autopsy, and which each autopsy costs \$3,500, the cost to do so has been adding up quickly. Ms. Swanson noted that La Porte County was the only County following this practice, and the Prosecutor's reasoning was that a drug dealer could not be prosecuted if one of their users was discovered to have had a heart-attack, or similar malady, instead of an overdose. She explained that of the 92 autopsies, only 2 aided in successful prosecutions, and of all those autopsies performed, none yielded results of death by maladies instead of drug overdoses.

Mr. Novak emphasized the difficulty in prosecuting a drug dealer in court without definitive proof of the Coroner's findings, which Ms. Swanson argued that the overdose's occurrence should be evidence in court enough to allow for prosecution, and that ruling out maladies was a costly requirement. She instead recommended offering toxicology studies as evidence instead, as their cost was \$217 instead of \$3,500.

Mr. DiMartino added that the Prosecutor's request for autopsies was so he could rule out any other intervening cause, as required by law, which Mr. Yagelski debated that other counties were allegedly not following this practice.

Mr. Mollenhauer advocated that the two victims' families who were involved with the successful prosecutions were likely very grateful for the Prosecutor's actions in utilizing the Coroner's findings, whereas Mr. Garner asked Ms. Swanson as to why she, an elected official, was taking direction from another elected official. Ms. Swanson explained that the Prosecutor was the only other County figure who could force her hand in making decisions. In one case, she noted, a body needed to be exhumed, which cost the Coroner roughly \$8,000, a cost which she received no aid in paying for. Mr. Cunningham argued that although 2 families had received closure through the prosecution of drug dealers, the remaining 90 had received none, and could have alternately experienced great disappointment. Mr. Novak interjected, stating that conversation with the Prosecutor would likely be needed.

ii. Five members voted in favor (Mr. Novak, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Mollenhauer) and two members voted not-in-favor (Mrs. Gramarossa, Mr. Garner).

Mr. Cunningham explained that he only voted in favor of the motion as Ms. Swanson was being forced to abide by the Prosecutor's request, while Mrs. Gramarossa recommended tabling the item until the Prosecutor could be spoken to about the topic. Mr. Novak asked Ms. Swanson if she had enough funds to afford the autopsies through June, which Ms. Swanson confirmed that she would be able to manage with her current funds through June.

iii. Motion to withdraw and table until the June 2022 Council Meeting made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mrs. Gramarossa.

iv. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County EMS

Requesting Additional Appropriation from Riverboat (1191) or ARP (8950/8951) for:
Retrofit 3 ambulances with power load cot systems.

\$73,574.91

i. Motion to approve out of ARP (8950/8951) made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.

ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County Human Resources

Requesting Additional Appropriation from Riverboat (1191) or ARP (8950/8951) for:
External market salary study.

not-to-exceed \$20,000

Mr. Cunningham explained that the previously open-ended contract, which could have racked up potentially large costs, was now capped and was written so that its costs would not exceed \$20,000.

i. Motion to approve out of ARP (8950/8951) made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.

Mr. Rosenbaum commented that he found it silly to pursue this report without running an efficiency study as well. Mr. Novak recommended that Mr. Rosenbaum provide the findings and cost for an efficiency study at the next Council Meeting, to which Mr. Rosenbaum contested that it was the duty of the Commissioners to do so. Mr. Rosenbaum did note, however, that he would look into the matter if the Commissioners did not.

ii. Six members voted in-favor (Mr. Novak, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Mollenhauer, Mrs. Gramarossa, Mr. Garner) and one member voted not-in-favor (Mr. Rosenbaum).

La Porte County Circuit Court

Requesting permission to transfer monies from Care of Inmates Account 1000-30074-000-0148 into Legal intern account 1000-10135-000-0148 for:

Shortage in Legal Intern account.

\$10,000

i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.

ii. All members voted in favor.

COUNCIL/ATTORNEY COMMENTS

Mr. Cunningham took a moment to point out that, at this time in the fifth month of the County's fiscal year, \$366,831 in additional appropriations - likely resulting from increased fuel costs, inflation, and other costs of living rising in price - had been requested from the Council to date. He continued that he feared that more requests for additional appropriations would likely happen, and the Council should be prepared to address this in the upcoming Budget Hearings. Mr. Novak added that fluctuating fuel prices caused both strains and surpluses in previous years, which had resulted in the need to increase budgets. Mr. Stabosz explained that the growth factor was tied in with the new money collected for the General Fund, from property taxes, which in turn was tied to the prior 5-6 year increase of non-farm income, so as costs and inflation immediately rose, new monies collected via property tax would increase on a lag, as it was being averaged over the 5-6 prior years.

10/23

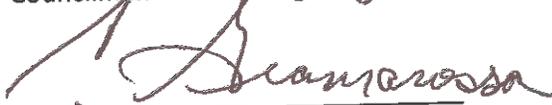
ADJOURNMENT

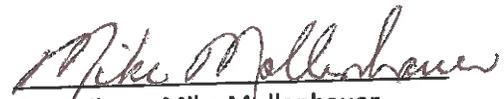
- i. Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer and Mrs. Gramarossa.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

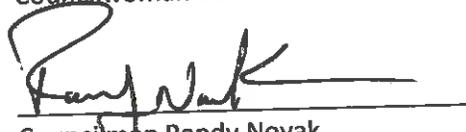
Examined & Approved by The La Porte County Council this 27th day of June 2022.


Councilman Earl Cunningham

ABSENT
Councilman Terry Garner


Councilwoman Connie Gramarossa


Councilman Mike Mollenhauer


Councilman Randy Novak


Councilman Mike Rosenbaum


Councilman Mark Yagelski

ATTEST: 
Timothy Stabosz, Auditor